National Distracted Driving Awareness Month was introduced as a resolution in 2010 by former Rep. Betsy Markey (D-CO) and passed by the U.S. House of Representatives in a 410-2 vote on March 23, 2010. The resolution mentions 9-year-old Erica Forney, who was struck and killed by a distracted driver in Fort Collins, CO, in November 2008. Erica’s mother, Shelley Forney, is a founding board member of Focus Driven - Advocates for Cell-free Driving.

The National Safety Council (NSC) claims that thousands die needlessly each year because people continue to use their cell phones while driving, handheld or hands-free. Join the NSC this April in urging those you care about to:

- Stop using cell phones while driving
- Understand the dangers of the cognitive distraction to the brain
- Inform people who call you while driving that you'd be happy to continue the conversation once they have reached their destination
- Tell others about the dangers of cell phone distracted driving

According to the American Automobile Association (AAA) Distracted Driving, including the use of cell phones - is a major contributor to automobile crashes. Between 4,000 and 8,000 crashes related to distracted driving occur daily in the United States. In a year, they contribute to as many as one-half of the 6 million U.S. crashes reported annually. The best advice is to avoid distractions whenever possible. Driver distractions are nothing new. They’ve been a topic of discussion since windshield wipers were introduced in cars during the early 1900s. Using a cellular phone while driving can increase your chances of being involved in a crash. But research shows other distractions such as eating a sandwich, tending to small children, conversing with a passenger or gazing at objects outside the vehicle occur more frequently and can be just as distracting as talking or texting on a cell phone. Now, imagine the risks if you combine two or more of the above tasks! To help avoid the dangers of
distracted driving, limit your interaction with passengers, avoid talking while driving, avoid taking your eyes off the road, keep both hands on the wheel.

According to a study conducted by the California Highway Patrol (CHP) “the leading factors causing distracted driving accidents are cell phone use, attending to children and eating. Cell phone use represents the greatest factor in causing distractions while driving. In fact, while it’s hard to imagine life without a cell phone, you increase the risk of having an accident by 400 percent every time you use your cell phone when driving. Your focus on driving is diverted when you enter a number or get involved in a conversation. Remember: Driving safely is always more important than using or answering your cell phone.

New Jersey has a strict law against using handheld electronic devices while driving a motor vehicle. As per the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission and NJ statute 39:4-97.3, “State law prohibits the use of handheld electronic devices (e.g., cellular telephones) while driving a motor vehicle on any public road or highway. Fines for breaking this law range between $100 and $250.

There are some very simple rules to follow when driving: Stay focused; pay attention; expect the unexpected and always watch out for the other guy. Special attention needs to be focused on your driving in inclement weather. Snow, ice, rain, or fog are some New Jersey driving hazards that require the complete attention of the driver to help avoid an accident. If you follow these additional simple tips from the California Highway Patrol it will help prevent you from being in an accident and injured:

- Properly buckle up everyone.
- Be well-rested. (drowsy driving is very similar to DWI driving)
- Do not tailgate. (allow sufficient room between you and the car in front of you, and leave extra distance in inclement weather)
- Allow sufficient time to reach your destination. (don’t speed, take your time)
- Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained.

Reminder: A vehicle being driven dangerously can be a deadly weapon.

OPERATION TAKE BACK: On behalf of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New Jersey Division, the Atlantic County Prosecutors Office, the Richard Stockton College Police Department, and Galloway Township Police Department we would like to invite you to participate in Operation Take Back.

On Saturday, April 27, 2013 from 10am to 2pm, Operation Take Back will be launched. The goal of the program is to allow the citizens of New Jersey to rid their homes of unused, unwanted, or expired medications by turning these medications in to law enforcement officials who can in turn dispose of these controlled substances in a safe and non-hazardous manner, preventing these pills from falling into the hands of juveniles or into the illicit market in our communities.
The Richard Stockton College Police Department in conjunction with the Galloway Township Police Department will be hosting a collection site during the hours of 10am and 2pm located outside of the new Campus Center which is located off of Vera King Farris Drive between Parking Lots 1 thru 4.

As our department has offered in the past, if you cannot make it to Stockton during the date or hours of collection, you may bring your medications for disposal to the Richard Stockton College Police Department or we can come to your office to retrieve them prior to the scheduled event date. If you would like to personally deliver your medications for disposal to a collection site near your hometown on April 27th, please visit www.dea.gov to find a collection site location nearest you.

This is an anonymous program and all efforts are made to protect the anonymity of individuals disposing of medications, therefore, it is recommended that:

The individual may dispose of the medication either in its original container or by removing medication from its original container and disposing it directly into the drug disposal box. If the original container is submitted, the individual may either remove the prescription label or conceal any personal identifying information with a marker.

Liquid products, such as cough medicines, should remain sealed in their original container. Please ensure the cap is tightly sealed to prevent leakage.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Richard Stockton College Police Department at 609-652-4390 for further information or instructions.

TIP OF THE WEEK: Watch out for the other guy when you are driving. Many times it is the other person’s driving that caused the accident. Don’t be hesitant to contact the police if you observe an aggressive driver. They may be intoxicated or under the influence of a drug. So even though you did not get hurt by that driver, someone else may. Report it to the police by dialing 9-1-1 and provide the vehicle description (make, model, color) and most importantly, the license plate number and state of registration to them.

Remember, safety is everyone’s business, so please report any safety or security concern to us at X4390 or dial 9-1-1 in an emergency.